

# The Big Picture of Advocacy: Counselor, Heal Society and Thyself

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■ This article, motivational in purpose, encourages counselors to be engaged in the growing movement for social justice advocacy in counseling. Analyses of a macrolevel framework of advocacy extend to microlevel operations of recruitment, sociopolitical education, diversity management, and self-care of counselor-advocates. Case studies and exemplars illustrate views expressed.

This article explores how counselors can be a part of the growing movement for social justice advocacy in counseling. Lately, counselors have come to realize how important counseling skills, interventions, insights, and the counseling relationship are in helping more community members as well as systems of mental health services and professional organizations (e.g., American Counseling Association, American Psychological Association) become social justice advocates and helping more social justice advocates become effective builders of societies (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar, & Israel, 2006). This article begins with a big-picture analysis of social justice advocacy. Counselors need a seasoned or mature critical consciousness of the big picture so that they understand why they are engaged in, and give voice to, social justice advocacy. The idea is that a single issue is not sufficient and that effective counselor-advocates need to develop an integrated sense of the underlying social system, political economy, and the dynamics of social action history and strategy.

## ■ To Be or Not to Be Socially Adjusted

Martin Luther King Jr. Challenges Diagnosis and Treatment

Counselors who offer individual mental health services treat clients diagnosed with *adjustment disorder*, which is defined as the development of clinically significant emotional or behavioral symptoms in response to an identifiable psychosocial stressor or stressors (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Forty years ago, however, in an Invited Distinguished Address at the 1967 annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Martin Luther King Jr. challenged the hindering notion that the goal of therapy is to help clients become “well-adjusted” to the social world around them. As King put it,

You who are in the field of psychology have given us a great word. It is the word “maladjusted.” This word is probably used more than any other word in psychology. It is a good word; certainly it is good that in dealing with what the word implies you are declaring that destructive maladjustment should be

eradicated. You are saying that all must seek the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But on the other hand, I am sure that we all recognize that there are some things in our society, some things in our world, to which we should never be adjusted. . . . We must never adjust ourselves to racial discrimination and racial segregation. We must never adjust ourselves to religious bigotry. We must never adjust ourselves to economic conditions that take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. We must never adjust ourselves to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence. (“King’s Challenge to the Nation’s Social Scientists,” 1999, pp. 9–10)

## Becoming Creatively Maladjusted

King argued that it is actually pathological for a person to become well-adjusted to a world of injustice, violence, war, and exploitation. He argued that for counselors to make a meaningful contribution to people’s mental health, they would have to find ways to help ordinary citizens develop their capacity for what King called “creative maladjustment nonconformity” (as cited in Carson, 1995, p. 319). King’s fundamental argument was that counselor-advocates who are actively engaged in healing society are creatively maladjusted. I call on all counselors to give voice to King’s argument that it is the advocate half of the counselor-advocate that puts the *creative* into what Martin Luther King Jr. called *creative maladjustment nonconformity*.

## ■ Organizational Obstacles to Counselor Social Justice Advocacy

### Societal Forces Behind Mental Illness

Not everyone in academic departments or in mental health services supports helping ordinary people; community groups; as well as government, city, or private organizations become citizen advocates who work together for positive social and environmental changes. For all the talk in counseling of helping people overcome alienation, learned helplessness, and internalized ha-

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ted, many counselors do not endorse the societal dimensions of these concepts. It is time, however, that counselors understand the political and economic forces that cause so much of the alienation, depression, and self-hatred in their clients.

In the past few years, when doing disaster recovery outreach in tsunami-affected South India, hurricane-affected New Orleans, and HIV/AIDS-infected Black shanty towns of South Africa, I have thought frequently of a question originally raised by Michael Lerner (1998): "What are the psychological forces that keep people from rebelling against a social order that is oppressive and prevents them from being all that they could be?" (p. xv). That is, in social justice terms, what prevents people from living the lives they most want? To dislodge the citizenry's paralysis from what Lerner called *surplus powerlessness*, counselors must use their psychological understandings, interventions, and the counseling relationship to help people develop their capacity to join together in social justice advocacy and make the world a better place for themselves, their neighbors, and others.

### Interpersonal Skills Versus Inequity Protests

Justice and fairness, however, are large; complex; and, to some counselors, disagreeable subjects. In two predominantly White universities where I have served, I have listened to faculty discussions regarding my department's multicultural climate and the recruitment and retention of racial/ethnic minority and international students. During these discussions, the words *power* and *politics* have never been used, not even once. I believe that the absence of these words is no accident. Although very skilled interpersonally, counselors are unskilled in talking about inequity and the relationships of power in institutions. Inequity can be an unfamiliar or scary topic. There are unspoken taboos against talking seriously about the very forces that undermine social justice.

Lerner (1998) said, "Most therapists don't understand the social conditions which lead to so much pain in personal life, so they are unlikely to be able to uncover meaningful ways for individuals to deal with those social conditions" (p. 325). Psychology is more symptom focused than etiologically focused, which can discount the impact of context and social inequities on a client's life. Although Lerner (1998) admitted that therapy can help people be less self-destructive, he also pointed out that "these benefits mostly fit into the category of 'learning to cope with an oppressive reality'" (p. 329). The benefits do not add up to aiding people to learn how to work with others to change the larger social, political, and economic reality around them. Like King, Lerner argued that most counselors unwittingly play a restraining/repressive role in society because they squander the opportunity to foster social justice advocacy in their clients, colleagues, and the organizations they serve. As Lerner (1998) put it,

Lacking a sense of social causality, most therapists interpret the frustrations of family and personal life as individual

failings. Instead of bringing their clients to an understanding of the larger social forces that shape their individual experiences, therapists implicitly suggest that the problems are individual in scope, and can be adequately solved by changes in individual psyches or through changes in their family systems. (p. 323)

Counselor-advocates need to watch for everything in their past training, professional demands, and social class background that press in the direction of individual self-help.

### ■ A Subtle Sticking Point: Counselor Pursuit of Personhood

Because of the emphasis in training that counselors participate in self-reflection, individual supervision, process analysis, and personal psychotherapy, counselors could delay their outward social advocacy until they have cultivated their personhood. The linear "personal growth first, then activism at some unspecified future" goes contrary to Mahatma Gandhi's youthful legal advocacy to fight for dispossessed Indians in South Africa, a cause that crossed the Indian Ocean and matured into the nationwide satyagraha, or nonviolence movement, ending British raj, or imperialism, in India. Similarly, a young Nelson Mandela gave eloquent courtroom performances to fight apartheid in South Africa. Let counselors not be overwhelmed with surplus powerlessness by the state of the world and do nothing to change the world. The essence of Gandhi's message to schoolchildren, to the youth, and to every man and woman was to protest in small ways in their respective communities because small voices and acts of change would ultimately make the difference between repression and liberation. We counselors hold back from becoming engaged in advocacy because, as Paul Loeb (1999) noted,

many of us have developed what I call the perfect standard: Before we will allow ourselves to take action on an issue, we must be convinced not only that the issue is the world's most important, but that we have perfect understanding of it, perfect moral consistency in our character, and that we will be able to express our views with perfect eloquence. . . . Whatever the issue, whatever the approach, we never feel we have enough knowledge or standing. If we do speak out, someone might challenge us, might find an error in our thinking or an inconsistency—what they might call a hypocrisy—in our lives. (p. 105)

Christina Michaelson (2006), a psychologist who advocates for peace, falls into this personal growth trap. She said that to bring peace to others, peace proponents must first manifest peace in their own lives. They must cultivate an inner state of peacefulness. They must become quiet and focus their thoughts, which will make deep transformations in their personality. Although seeking personal growth makes professional sense to all counselors, it should not become a hindering notion to social justice advocacy. Time and time again, effective social movements have been made by those, such as

Gautama Buddha, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King Jr., who did not wait on perfection, complete knowledge, or enlightenment, but who just got started. These social leaders also had personal flaws, which, however, did not hinder their social vision and cause.

## ■ A Case Study: Journey to Becoming a Social Justice Advocate

Martin Luther King Jr.'s journey to advocacy is a great example of how an advocate gets involved in social action before discovering fully what major societal changes entail and what leadership tasks and responsibilities await the person. On December 1, 1955, King was 26 years old and still new to town. His church, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, was one of the smallest, wealthiest, and most conservative of the Black churches in Montgomery, Alabama. His only professional ambitions at the time were to run a solid church program, be paid for it, have a house for his growing family, perhaps write some theology pieces for his denomination's magazine, and do a bit of adjunct teaching at a nearby college once he was better established (Gardner, 1995). King was socially well adjusted at this point in his life, but his situation changed after he became involved with the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott's real organizer was Edgar D. Nixon, an experienced civil rights and labor advocate who launched the boycott within the first 4 days after Rosa Parks's arrest for refusing to move to the back of the bus (Fayer & Vecchione, 1987). Nixon then started calling local ministers to line up their support for the idea (Tye, 2004). Although initially hesitant, King agreed to come to a meeting to discuss the boycott idea. Nixon chuckled and told King that he was glad that King had agreed because Nixon had already set up the first meeting at King's church (Branch, 1989). At the meeting, King was nervous about Nixon's and Parks's boycott proposal, and several other ministers soon began to side with King against the boycott idea. In his own memoir of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, King recalled how Nixon finally exploded toward the end of the meeting and shouted that the ministers would have to decide whether they were going to continue to act like scared little boys or whether they were going to stand up like grown men and take a strong public stand against segregation (Carson, 1998). To prove his courage, King immediately agreed to Nixon's plan for an aggressive, community-organizing campaign to build up the boycott. Although everyone present had expected Nixon to become the president of the newly formed Montgomery Improvement Association, Nixon nominated King. Having just loudly declared his courage to the whole group, King felt that he had to agree to take on this responsibility. King's biographer said,

King was a leader full of self-doubts, keenly aware of his own limitations and human weaknesses. He was at times reluctant to take on the responsibilities suddenly thrust upon him. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott, for example, when he worried about the threats to his life and the lives of his wife

and child, he was overcome with fear rather than confident and secure in his leadership role. (Carson, 1995, p. 320)

King, under pressure, rose to Nixon's challenge. Serving as the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott for the next 12 months profoundly changed him. Watching 42,000 poor and working-class Black people stay organized and do without public transportation for a year, he discovered things about the courage and capacity of ordinary people to resist oppression and move toward freedom (Fayer & Vecchione, 1987). Watching the conservative, right-wing city government finally cave in to the boycott, he discovered the power of mass nonviolent direct-action campaigns to win real victories—even when they are opposed by powerful interests (Fayer & Vecchione, 1987). By seeing his own power to inspire people to become active citizens for a noble cause, King also discovered just what kind of leader he wanted to be in this life. He now fully embraced his new mission as an advocate and leader for fundamental social change in the United States (Fayer & Vecchione, 1987).

There is an important lesson in this case study of King. We counselors do not have to be born advocates. We do not have to attain perfect inner growth and wisdom before participating in social action. Nor do we have to know everything we need to know before getting started. We just have to get started. Even though we still have much to learn, there is tremendous power for both individual and social transformation by just engaging in social advocacy right now.

Where is counseling's voice? After 40 years, can the counseling profession advocate King's vision of civil rights for all and maintain the high moral ground despite the odds or because of the odds of a dispassionate health care system whose service ends up in racial/ethnic disparities? If counseling illuminates King's vision, people will not have abnormal fears as opposed to legitimate fears. They will have the courage and faith to assemble together to reenforce their will for a fair, just, and compassionate society as their predecessors did, the bus-boycotting Black men and women who gathered every evening in their Montgomery, Alabama, churches for over a year after walking daily in protest to and from work for several miles.

In concluding this segment about the big picture of social justice advocacy, I quote one advocate interviewed in *The Listening Project* (Peace Development Fund, 1999): "If we are not developing people's critical consciousness and analysis of the systems, institutions, and culture that create unjust societal relationships . . . what is the purpose of our organizing?" (p. 19). Counselor-advocates need to increase their capacity to frame their local work within a larger context, even globally and internationally, and move beyond single-issue thinking. The present article's analysis now extends to microlevel operational issues, or what can be termed *back to the basics*.

## ■ Back to the Basics of Organizing

### Recruitment of Counselor-Advocates: A Case Study

Since embarking on national and international community outreach in disaster-affected areas, I have needed to recruit

teams of graduate student volunteers, fellow professionals, as well as community stakeholders in disaster areas. When I recruit, I keep in mind the story of Lois Gibbs (1998). In the 1980s, Gibbs was a high-school-educated homemaker living in a working-class neighborhood of Love Canal, New York. She had never been an advocate before, but to her horror she discovered that much of her neighborhood was built on a toxic dump site and that the chemicals left behind were poisoning her and her neighbors' children. Gibbs found enough inner courage to start recruiting many neighbors and outside allies to help her solve the toxic pollution situation at Love Canal. She was successful with her campaign and went on to create the Center for Health, Environment and Justice, a group that, in the past 2 decades, has provided technical assistance to more than 10,000 local antitoxic groups across the country. Gibbs has literally helped thousands of people, particularly working-class women, become creative and effective advocates against their unhealthy circumstances.

To illustrate, here is a story about Gibbs (1998). Gibbs was at a bar with a small group of women who opposed the building of a solid waste incinerator in their town. They believed that this incinerator would add too many toxic chemicals into the town's environment, with particularly damaging effects on the children living closest to the facility, and they were distressed that no one else seemed to care. When asked by Gibbs whether they had listened to their neighbors, the women asserted that they had indeed, but to no avail. When Gibbs did a role play with them on recruitment, the women talked *at* her without ever learning who she was or what she cared about. Gibbs suspected that these advocates were not very savvy yet about how to interact with people to be good recruiters.

In the bar, Gibbs was challenged by the women to show them how to recruit a scruffy man who was having a beer and watching television. To help them learn recruitment in what seemed to Gibbs a teachable moment, Gibbs made a bet with them for \$50 that she could recruit this man. Gibbs got up and sat down next to the man and told him about the group's goals. The man was clearly uninterested in working to stop the incinerator. She then asked him what he did care about locally, and what he would change if he had the power to do so. Gibbs listened for 10 minutes. It turned out that the man was an independent trucker who owned his own rig but had a pretty narrow profit margin every year. He talked about potholes and how costly his truck maintenance was because of them. When Gibbs had collected enough information to feel she understood where the man was coming from, she asked if he drove much on Route 10, where the incinerator was going to be built, and he said he drove that way all the time. She also asked if the town and county were good about keeping Route 10 in good shape. The man laughed bitterly and started complaining again about how much money he lost every year when he had to make expensive repairs to his rig. Gibbs then asked if it worried him that there would be hundreds of trucks carrying tons of garbage every day on Route 10 if the new incinerator were to be built. The trucker

groaned, saying his repair bills would become impossible to pay. It was only then that Gibbs pointed to the women, saying that they were trying to put together a citizens' group to stop the incinerator. She recognized that the women did not share his problem; however, she knew that the women could really use his help and concluded that both the women and the trucker had good reasons to be opposed to the incinerator. In this way, Gibbs was able to recruit the trucker to the women's environmentalist group.

### A Good Counseling Relationship

There are aspects of the interaction between Gibbs and the trucker that are similar to a good counseling relationship or a working alliance. One element that is essential in counseling is having good listening skills. The trucker joined the group because Gibbs listened to him, identified what he cared about, and tied it to the local issue. Talking with people does not mean giving people a speech and waiting for their immediate applause. Gibbs knew that one has to listen deeply to people's stories and pay attention to their reactions to one's understanding of a problem. Gibbs also knew that one has to build rapport with people to get them to join one's cause. She knew the power of respecting how people define their own goals and self-interests. Gibbs (1998) said, "Once you trigger someone's self-interest, then you have to convince that person of the ability of your group or coalition to tackle the [person's] issue and win" (p. 161). Once knowing the trucker's issues, she then offered an action option that might remove a threat from his life. She gently encouraged, but did not force, the trucker to take an action step.

Gibbs illustrated psychologically smart recruiting, a good practice for counselor-advocates to increase the number of committed and enduring advocacy change agents joining their cause. In my community outreach work, my challenge is to communicate to potential counselor-advocates that when they heal society, they heal themselves both personally and professionally.

### Sociopolitical Education of Counselor-Advocates

Sociopolitical education comes before people help a specific advocacy effort. The guiding assumption behind sociopolitical education is that for counselors to break out of a denial of the existence of oppression or a lack of commitment to societal change, they have to develop what cognitive sociologists call a "collective action frame" (Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 136). A frame that is most likely to inspire collective action includes discussions and redefinitions of the injustice or immorality of specific social conditions, an external attribution of blame for them, a corresponding sense of internal responsibility for corrective action, and some kind of action agenda for solving them. The challenge for counselor-advocates, then, is to articulate in such a way that the frames they construct to understand injustices develop over time into a more mature collective action frame, which aligns an array of events and experiences, some very diverse and even incongruous, that hang together as a meaningful, unified package. Such a master frame resonates with listeners who are much more

likely to become recruits for an advocacy cause and to start work with those affected by injustices to change in effective ways their unjust circumstances.

In summer 2007, prior to performing community outreach in South Africa, I spent several days as a coleader of a 21-member team learning the history of apartheid and visiting museums and art collections in Johannesburg and Soweto on freedom fighters. The team visited segregated Black townships or shanty towns/slums and took the long, rocky boat ride to Robben Island, the prison labor camp for freedom fighters. In group process meetings after these trips, I interpreted the racism of White European colonists and rulers and tearfully expressed my outrage at South Africa's history of Black oppression. Team members and my coleader, then followed, presenting their respective interpretation schemata. I and two student volunteers wrote reflective journal entries on personally meaningful history lessons as well as indicated our commitment to connecting with South African community members who were survivors of abusive societal structures. The following are excerpts from our journal entries, which show synchronicity in our respective sociopolitical frames.

The fun of Table Mountain was completely wiped out by Robben Island's history of prison camps and forced, non-productive limestone mining labor. Here Nelson Mandela and other freedom fighters, which included high school children, were classified and separated by the shades of their skin color. . . . As an outsider . . . who [had] heard stories of the British colonization of her country of origin, India, all her growing-up years, I am confused by the talk of forgiveness and reconciliation. To me forgiveness and reconciliation are the issues of individual relationships rather than addressing through community activism and education the large-scale oppression and eradication of minorities. Will the history of apartheid be forgotten by the generations to come and how will they learn to prepare and protect themselves from another potential Nazi-like assault on their humanity[?] But I am speaking from the limitations of my worldview and cultural encapsulation and what I am saying may be more true of yesterday than of tomorrow. (Roisircar, 2007, para. 2, 4)

The journey to Robben Island was a lonely one. The excited and anticipatory chatter that accompanied our departure from Victoria and Alfred waterfront was soon washed away by the steeply rolling waves and the somber reality that Mandela and other political prisoners had made this same trip (on this same vessel) not long before. As we drew further away from the mainland, I experienced an overwhelming sense of isolation and loneliness. The political prisoners here were forced to be not only physically but psychologically displaced from all that they had known and worked for so passionately. Names became numbers, identity reduced to race, [and] interactions between separated groups were discouraged if not punished by solitary confinement. And yet this place haunted by the

ghosts of so much loss, suffering and oppression has come to symbolize hope and freedom. The human spirit transcended the physical barriers placed between the prisoners and the prisoners and the mainland. Ingenious methods of connection and communication were devised including notes in bibles transferred by priests, in tennis balls thrown over fences.

We as group members and visitors to this place are also seeking connections—with each other and with our [South African community] contacts here. I find myself reaching out where I can to drop my anchor amidst the uncertain seas of our experience. My draw to connect, I believe, is a protective measure, an effort at establishing trust and formation of a support network with which to weather the storm of our intense [outreach] experiences to come. It is an antidote to isolation and [a] gauge by which to monitor my own processes of change that will inevitably occur. (Gillespie, 2007, para. 1–2)

Robben Island, I believe, is not something that you can process in one day. I have many strong feelings festering inside of me and hope that in time they can come out, and I can accurately share this experience with others. An initial thought that I had upon returning to the hotel, looking around, and slipping into my down comforter bed was, "Wow . . . I have so much to be thankful for". I felt a bit of guilt as I thought of the brave [freedom fighters] who endured the minimalist of [living] conditions [and torture] for what they believed in. Dr. West Olitunji (our group leader) teaches me a lifelong lesson. It is not helpful to feel guilty for my possessions and privilege, but to work as hard as you can so others may have access to them. (Blanchard, 2007, para. 2)

In giving these exemplars, I want to communicate just how important sociopolitical education is to the effectiveness of social justice advocacy and collective action. How can a politically engaged counseling profession do more to aid communities, and how can mental health services professionals push for needed changes in the social lives of people less privileged than they?

### Diversity Management

Social justice community action is likely to attract multicultural professionals and volunteers, such as racial/ethnic minorities, international students from developing and politically embroiled nations, and individuals who have lived among those in poverty. Community action efforts are also joined by privileged White people who are altruistic and want to create access for individuals who are less privileged or joined by White people who wish to prepare themselves to work with diverse clients. Such a multicultural team of counselor-advocates will inevitably experience interpersonal conflicts that result from different worldviews of time, independent versus interdependent self-construal, gender roles, arguments regarding who comes from the most oppressed/victimized sociocultural group, and so on. To prevent value and perceived differences from destroying a team and, therefore, the execution of a long-planned and committed community project, one must openly address these

conflicts with multicultural competence in group and individual meetings. Counselor-advocates who lead community action teams need multicultural competency in leading diversity dialogues. In particular, their multicultural competency skills provide supportive interaction through active listening, encouragement, thoughtful questioning, and empathy for non-conforming behaviors and dissenting ideas; help in dealing with conflicts; help in providing stability and commitment; help in fending off outside attacks or threats; and help in connecting and consulting with other experienced social justice advocates who can advise on difficult group dynamics.

### Self-Care of Counselor-Advocates

Counselor-advocates sometimes provide frontline relief services. There is little understanding, however, of factors that protect their well-being, such as preventing burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, or secondary trauma, and promoting self-care, resilience, and multicultural adaptation. One of my student volunteers reflected on her Katrina relief work in a daily journal: "As I began hearing the stories of the devastation, lack of institutional organization, and deplorable conditions that residents of the area were contending with, I felt a pain in my gut that I knew I could not ignore." (Journal entries on relief work done by my organization, Disaster Shakti, can be found at <http://www.multiculturalcenter.org/shakti/katrina/>.) Disaster volunteers are eager to help but are often ill prepared for the stresses of disaster work. Ehrenreich and Elliott (2004) listed the following stressors that humanitarian workers report: long hours in treacherous conditions; excessive amounts of work; separation from family; lack of privacy; constant immersion in fear and danger; lack of appreciation; sense of helplessness; and overwhelming guilt for having food, clothing, shelter, or other things that the disaster-affected population lacks. There is little understanding of how volunteers may use their resiliency and self-care practices to protect themselves from such stressors.

When one looks at self-care from a prevention perspective, the central focus of an advocacy organization is to prevent burdening its team with one member's unresolved personal problems. An organization's focus is to make satisfying and energetic contributions amidst the frequent chaos, unpredictability, and stresses involved in advocacy work, thereby adding to the spirit of stability, humor, good cheer, and mutual respect in social justice organizations and collective action.

Advocacy workshop trainer Randy Schutt (2001) pointed out that social justice advocates "cannot work effectively to create a good society if they continually carry on their own emotional baggage" (p. 70). He believed that any training program for advocates "must include ways for people to learn how to stop inflicting their dysfunctional behavior on others and help them learn means to interrupt others' inappropriate behavior" (Schutt, 2001, p. 70). The feelings, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors of advocates, despite their commitment to societal change, are still often misshaped by some of the worst features of contemporary culture—especially by what Lerner called *surplus powerlessness*.

Schutt (2001) referred advocacy organizations to the counseling literature to teach their members how to reduce health care needs: by being informed about emotional traumas, their sources, and how to overcome these; by having loving relationships; by exercising regularly; by eating a healthy diet; by receiving massages; by engaging in meditation, counseling, and sufficient leisure; by having companionship for shared leisure activities; and by enjoying simple pleasures, such as hiking, conversations, storytelling, shared play, music, singing, and reading.

Si Kahn (1982), in addition, noted key personal characteristics of social justice advocates: They like people; build trust and friendships easily; have a sense of humor; listen well; help people believe in themselves; can let others take the credit; work hard; are self-disciplined, mature, and able to set limits; do not get discouraged too often; have a solid sense of identity and personal vision; are flexible and open to new ideas; and are honest and courageous even in the face of stress and fear (see pp. 26–28). These necessary counselor-advocate attributes can be compromised when people are in the grip of burnout, spiritual despair, or personal neglect. Social justice advocacy organizations must monitor and consult with their team members on self-care issues.

Many of the basics that facilitate social justice work, such as the recruitment of counselor-advocates, sociopolitical education, diversity management, and counselor self-care, can be carried out in psychologically sound ways. It is also important for organizations to produce action research (e.g., Roysircar, Brodeur, & Irigoyen, 2008) and practice tools (Roysircar, 2008) so as to increase the effectiveness of social justice organizations.

### Conclusion

Let counselors get in their time machines and travel through the past 4 decades since King made his speech to the American Psychological Association in 1967. Although the civil rights movement of the 1960s won incredibly important legal victories, racism still exists in the United States, actually painfully so. The country has to do better in preparing for, responding to, and redesigning public and private infrastructure so that its people can deal with the very predictable disasters of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Voting regularly or writing letters to elected officials are not going to be enough—especially when not all the votes are counted and thousands of people of color are repeatedly pushed off the voting rolls in states such as Florida and Ohio. Many more counselor-advocates need to become intensely socially active, volunteer with advocacy organizations, and build a social movement of the magnitude of Gandhi's independence movement in India, the U.S. civil rights movement and women's movement of the 1950s and 1960s, or even the Polish solidarity movement that helped bring down the authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe. The choices counselor-advocates make now and in the years ahead will make a material difference in the relative effectiveness and power of their advocacy for peace, justice, equity, access, racial equality, internationalism, and disaster recovery.

This article concludes with some words from another 1967 King speech, in which he came out publicly from the pulpit of New York City's Manhattan Riverside Church against the United States' invasion of Vietnam. With just a few changes of words, King is resurrected speaking to all of us counselors today. In his 1967 speech "Beyond Vietnam," King said,

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see . . . the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say: "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of South America and say, "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just. . . . A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: This way of settling differences is not just. . . . If we do not act we shall surely be dragged down the long dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight. . . . Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world. . . . Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell [ourselves] the struggle is too hard? . . . Or will there be another message, of longing, of hope, of solidarity with [our own] yearnings, of commitment to [the] cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise, we must choose in this crucial moment of human history. (Carson, 1998, pp. 340–342)

The future is in our hands, counselor-advocates. Let us go for it.

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